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 FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
 TO RUEHIA/USIA WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6531  
 RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9667  
 INFO RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 9158  
 RUEHJP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 0879  
 RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 9376  
 RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR 9551  
 RUEHTG/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA 9890  
 RUEDEHA/USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN  
 RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC  
 RUEHSD/USLO CARIBBEAN  
 RUEOSBA/24 COMPW/DOI  
 RUCBSAA/USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA  
 BT  
 UNCLAS MANAGUA 01944

E.O. 12356: N/A  
 SUBJECT: PRESS COVERAGE OF CODEL MONTGOMERY IN MANAGUA

USIA FOR AR, P/G, P/PFL, VOA/BRL  
 DEPT FOR ARA/CEN, H, ARA/P, S/LPD  
 USIA OP CENTER HOLD FOR OPENING OF BUSINESS MARCH 24

REF: MANAGUA 1940

1. PRESS INTEREST IN CODEL MONTGOMERY'S VISIT WAS HIGH, WITH ABOUT 30 CORRESPONDENTS, U.S., NICARAGUAN AND THIRD-COUNTRY, ATTENDING BOTH ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCES. PRESS INTEREST WAS ESPECIALLY GREAT IN CODEL'S MEETINGS WITH CARDINAL OBANDO Y BRAVO AND WITH VICE PRESIDENT SERGIO RAMIREZ. JOURNALISTS WAITED OUTSIDE BOTH MEETINGS FOR STATEMENTS FROM CODEL MEMBERS.

2. COVERAGE LOCALLY WAS MODERATE. SANDINISTA TELEVISION (SSTV) IN ITS MARCH 22 NEWSCAST SHOWED CODEL MEETING WITH RAMIREZ, AND INCLUDED RAMIREZ' STATEMENTS THAT DEFEAT OF CONTRA AID PROPOSAL IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MARCH 20 "WOULD NOT STOP" REAGAN FROM HIS EFFORTS "TO SPREAD DESTABILIZATION AND TERRORISM AGAINST NICARAGUA THROUGH HIS ILLEGAL, UNJUST AND IMMORAL SUPPORT OF THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES." SSTV NOTED THAT TWO MEMBERS OF THE CODEL HAD VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE AID PROPOSAL AND TWO AGAINST, AND SAID THAT TO THEIR "HARD QUESTIONS," RAMIREZ GAVE "HARD ANSWERS."

3. RAMIREZ MET WITH PRESS AFTER HIS MEETING WITH CODEL, AND IN EXCERPTS OF THAT CONFERENCE SHOWN ON SSTV, HE SAID NICARAGUA WOULD "ACCEPT ULTIMATA FROM NO-ONE." MILITARILY, GON IS DEFEATING CONTRAS IN ALL AREAS, BUT THE WAR ALSO HAS INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ASPECTS, BECAUSE OF PRESIDENT REAGAN'S INVOLVEMENT,

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RAMIREZ SAID. SINCE REAGAN IS THE "HEAD CONTRA, AND THOSE ARE HIS WORDS, NOT MINE," THE WAR MUST BE CONNECTED TO THE WHITE HOUSE, VICE PRESIDENT CONTINUED. THE PRESIDENT FORCES CONGRESS INTO THE POSITION OF HAVING TO VOTE ON THE AID ISSUE. RAMIREZ TOLD THE PRESS THE GON WILL CONTINUE "TO RECEIVE ANY U.S. CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS WHO COME HERE TO SEARCH FOR A PATH TO PEACE."

4. SSTV MADE NO MENTION OF CODEL'S OTHER MEETINGS.

5. ALL THREE LOCAL NEWSPAPERS RAN FRONT-PAGE STORIES ON CODEL MARCH 22, WITH PRO-GON "EL NUEVO DIARIO" TAKING THE HARDEST LINE: OVER A BANNER HEAD READING "ARROGANCE AND SHAMELESSNESS," END RAN A SUBHEAD READING "CONGRESSMEN WHO VOTED TO DESTROY US ARRIVE." STORY'S LEAD IS, "WITHOUT THE LEAST HESITATION AND REFLECTING THEIR ARROGANCE, FOUR U.S. CONGRESSMEN WHO ARRIVED LAST NIGHT MAINTAINED THAT 'FOR THEM IT IS NOT IMMORAL FOR THE CONGRESS OF THEIR COUNTRY TO DISCUSS THE APPROVAL OF 100 MILLION DOLLARS IN AID FOR THE CONTRAS'." END EDITORIALIZES WITHIN STORY THAT "THERE WAS, NONETHELESS, NO CLEAR OR DEFINITE EXPLANATION OF WHAT RIGHT THE U.S. CONGRESS HAS TO DISCUSS THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DESTINY OF A SOVEREIGN NATION SUCH AS NICARAGUA, NOR DID THEY (CODEL) REFER TO THE FACT THAT THIS IS IN VIOLATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW."

6. END, NOTING QUESTION AT ARRIVAL PRESS CONFERENCE ON POSSIBLE SIMILARITIES WITH VIETNAM SITUATION, CITED ALLEGED RESPONSE OF CODEL MEMBERS THAT "'VIETNAM IS FAR AWAY...AND WE'RE NOT WORRIED THAT NICARAGUA MIGHT BE ANOTHER VIETNAM (FOLLOWED BY FOUR EXCLAMATION POINTS), BUT RATHER THAT IT MIGHT BE ANOTHER CUBA.' THAT IS, THEY CONFIRMED THE WARLIKE POSITION OF BRINGING MORE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION TO NICARAGUA, NO MATTER WHAT THE COST." END INSISTED THAT MAJORITY OF U.S. POPULATION OPPOSES AID TO CONTRAS. DURING THEIR STAY IN NICARAGUA, END SAID, CODEL WOULD, APART FROM ONE MEETING WITH A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL, BE MEETING WITH "THE MOST RECALCITRANT SECTORS," SUCH AS ENRIQUE BOLANOS OF COSEP, LA PRENSA, SOCIAL CHRISTIAN PARTY, COORDINADORA DEMOCRATICA, THE PLI, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHURCH AND THE CPDH.

7. END INCLUDED TWO PHOTOS IN ITS COVERAGE: FRONT-PAGE PHOTO OF FOUR MEMBERS OF CODEL IDENTIFIED THEM, INCLUDING REP. MONTGOMERY, "WHO HEADS THE DELEGATION AND WHO ALSO UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 MANAGUA 01944

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VOTED IN FAVOR OF DEATH...." BACK-PAGE PHOTO OF REP. GRAY, NOTING RINGS ON HIS HANDS, CALLED THEM "A SIGN OF OPULENCE." END DOES NOT PUBLISH ON SUNDAYS.

8. FSLN'S "BARRICADA" RAN SLIGHTLY MORE STRAIGHT FRONT-PAGE STORIES BOTH MARCH 22 AND 23. MARCH 22 ITEM, HEADED "FOUR U.S. SENATORS (SIC) ARRIVE," SAYS CODEL ARRIVED "GIVING DIFFERENT OPINIONS ON NICARAGUA'S POLITICAL FUTURE." PURPOSE OF VISIT WAS TO GATHER MORE INFORMATION IN PREPARATION FOR FUTURE VOTES ON CONTRA AID. BARRICADA LISTED MEETINGS ON SCHEDULE AND NOTED COMMENTS BY CODEL MEMBERS THAT SITUATION WAS "VERY COMPLEX." "ALTHOUGH THEY DISAGREED ON WHETHER NICARAGUA WOULD BECOME A FUTURE CUBA OR A FUTURE VIETNAM, ALL INDICATED THEIR CONCERN FOR THE THREAT (QUESTION MARK) THAT THIS COUNTRY REPRESENTS FOR THE SECURITY OF THE U.S. AND THE HEMISPHERE (EXCLAMATION POINT)." MARCH 23 STORY, HEADED

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"THE WAR WILL END WITH THE VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE," WAS  
EVEN SHORTER, AND MENTIONED ONLY MEETING WITH VICE  
PRESIDENT RAMIREZ. MOST OF QUOTES INCLUDED IN ARTICLE  
CAME FROM RAMIREZ' MEETING WITH THE PRESS AFTER CODEL  
HAD LEFT, INCLUDING HIS STATEMENT THAT NICARAGUA WOULD  
ACCEPT NO ULTIMATA.

9. INDEPENDENT LA PRENSA'S ONLY COVERAGE OF VISIT WAS  
UPI ITEM ON FRONT PAGE MARCH 22, HEADED "FOUR U.S.  
CONGRESSMEN IN MANAGUA: HERE TO FEEL OUT SITUATION."  
LA PRENSA ALSO DOES NOT PUBLISH ON SUNDAYS.  
CLYDE  
END OF MESSAGE

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